DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 376 605 EA 026 321

AUTHOR Frana, Bruce S.
TITLE The Micropolitical Influence of SES on a Building Principal and the Implementation of School Innovation.
PUB DATE Apr 94
NOTE 23p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April 4-8, 1994).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Accountability; *Administrator Role; Educational Finance; Grade 9; High Schools; *Organizational Change; *Parent Influence; *Politics of Education; Principals; Program Effectiveness; Program Evaluation; *Socioeconomic Status

ABSTRACT

This paper describes an educational innovation that survived only 2 years. The pilot program introduced team teaching, based on a middle-school philosophy, into three high schools in a relatively large midwestern school district. The interdisciplinary team sought to help ninth-graders make the transition from middle to high school. Despite concerns of district funding and the viability of such a program in high schools, the failure of the teacher-designed project is largely attributed to the actions of one of the principals. The paper describes the influence of the principal and how he was influenced by a small group of vocal, high-socioeconomic-status parents. Data were obtained through: (1) formal interviews with the 9 team teachers, 3 high school principals, and 3 central administrators; (2) informal interviews with other staff; and (3) observations of school- and district-level planning meetings. Findings indicate that despite problems that existed between and within levels of the district, they were insufficient in themselves to end the program. Rather, the principal lobbied to use project funding for other interests, expressed no interest in the project, and participated in making decisions that eventually ended it. It appears that he vetoed the project because he wanted to please a vocal, affluent constituency and because the innovation did not fit his favored data-driven approach. Since only the more powerful and affluent parents contacted the principal, who really become the winners and losers? (LMI)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 376 605

THE MICROPOLITICAL INFLUENCE OF SES ON A BUILDING PRINCIPAL AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL INNOVATION

Bruce S. Frana
University of Northern Iowa
Cedar Falls, Iowa

Paper presented at the Annual Meeting
of the American Educational Research Association

New Orleans, LA

April, 1994

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

B. Frana

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

EA 026 321

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Micropolitical Influence of SES on a Building Principal and the Implementation of School Innovation

Bruce Frana

Paper presented at 1994 AERA Annual Meeting, New Orleans

INTRODUCTION

This paper tells the story of innovation that began with high hopes only to end two years later. Like many innovations in education, this one was short lived. This story is part of a two year study of team teaching introduced into three high schools within the same district. Faced with what was perceived to be a higher than desired dropout and failure rate for ninth graders, three teachers were given the task of developing a pilot program to deal with this situation. After six months of research, discussions, and planning, the teachers settled on the teaming of three core subject areas to create a family atmosphere for the "average" student. In a sense, this was the middle school philosophy being brought up to the high school level. This in itself created some turmoil within a content driven high school setting. After the first year of the program, although it was deemed successful by the participating teachers and two of the three principals, questions had already begun to arise as to the viability of such a program in the high schools. Funding for the program had been secured for two full years from an outside source. State funding, however, was decreasing and therefore District monies were being looked at carefully by all concerned members of the community and District. This in itself became a matter of contention among administrators over the continuation of such an "expensive" innovation when the District would have to fund the program. However, money not withstanding, failure of this teacher designed project rests strongly with the influence of an individual, one of the high school principals.

The intent of this paper is not to blame but rather to discuss how an individual has come to exercise so much power within the district. This paper describes and discusses the influence of the high SES clientele upon the decision making processes of the leadership within the building and the impact this eventually had on an innovation that was described by one of the participating teachers as the "Advanced Placement class for the masses."

I collected the data over nearly two years, the 1991-'92 and 1992-'93 academic years, in a relatively large Midwestern school district. The larger case study involved following the implementation of the team teaching innovation within the district's three high schools. I formally interviewed the nine participating team teachers, three high school principals and three central administrators. As primary informants, I interviewed each a minimum of three one-hour sessions during the time of this study. Informal interviews consisted of department chairs, other building teachers, counselors, assistant principals, and district curriculum facilitators--these interviews were usually a half-hour in length. I also observed the individual team planning meetings within the schools (at least three times) and combined team meetings at the district level (eight times).

I selected a micropolitical view in studying the implementation of innovation in order to gain more insight into the process of innovation. Micropolitics

> refers to the use of formal and informal power by individuals and groups to achieve their goals in organizations. In large part, political actions result from perceived differences between individuals and groups, coupled with the motivation to use power to influence and/or protect. Although such actions are consciously motivated, any action, consciously or unconsciously motivated, may have political "significance" in a given situation. Both cooperative and conflictive actions and processes are part of the realm of micropolitics. Moreover, macro- and micropolitical factors frequently interact. (Blase, 1991, p. 11)

I believe the results are important for better understanding the change process. As Blase (1991) has stated, administrators or change agents often use perspectives and agendas that are "technical rather than political, practical rather than ethical, and as individual rather than collective" (p. 24). Within this paper, the administrator has been more influenced by the political as well as the practical and individual. I have discovered the usual problems encountered in innovation as reported in literature: jealousies, poor training, lack of commitment, accommodation, adaptation, budget constraints, and such. All are part of the story of why the team teaching program did not receive continued funding. And yet, these "barriers" aside, the teachers and several administrators have remained committed and continue to believe in the innovation as viable and important in the high school setting. In any event, what has evolved from this study is the story of the influence of one principal and how he in turn was influenced by a small but influential group of parents. The importance of values and beliefs as well as self-interest become a driving force for the accommodation of the high SES values system. All of this continues under the guise of "equity and equality" within the school (the words of Dr. Brown, principal).

THE INNOVATION

The purpose of the interdisciplinary team was to assist ninth grade students in the transition from middle school to high school. The team-teaching approach was designed and decided upon by three teachers representing three core subject areas in each of the participating high schools. These teachers were selected by their respective principals. Using money secured from an outside source, the three teachers were released to meet together each afternoon for six months to read and

discuss possible approaches. The final decision was to have a three-person team at each of three high schools. The idea was that the average student was left out of any special programming. By sharing the same students for three periods a day, and thereby having extra time to concentrate on student problems at a more personal level, the teachers hoped to assist in the transition to ninth grade. The additional teacher time came in the form of an extra preparation period. This time was for the discussion of student problems, contact with parents/guardians/significant people and other support personnel in the building, and to share ideas for implementing some interdisciplinary teaching.

The individual teams were allowed the freedom to be flexible in designing the program. One school selected a heterogeneous group of students with the intent of teaching all three sections in this fashion. Cooperative learning and citizenship/volunteerism were to be two thrusts of the team. A second group selected the average students and concentrated on basic skills. Their thrust, after realizing that they wanted to concentrate on only one or two major ideas, became the students and their personal problems.

The TEAM at North H.S. was restricted at first as to which teachers could be involved--no one teaching AP classes or serving the at-risk programs would be favorably considered by Dr. Brown because he believed this could cause problems for these other special programs. The TEAM had started with the hope of interdisciplinary teaching to a cross-section of students. Again they were limited by Dr. Brown, as one participating teacher noted: "Dr. Brown made it very clear at the start that this would probably be for average level kids. Because we had programs for top level and we had programs for skills, this would probably be for average

level kids." Dr. Brown put it as follows:

> They would have liked to have taken some top level English kids, they thought about it. I didn't say "No" but I didn't encourage it. Part of that is just survival on my part; I mean I'm not interested in [having] a bunch of parents who believe that they have top level kids call me and tell me that their kids are in a mediocre level program.

From the initial development, then, this TEAM and program had restrictions and controls placed upon it by the principal in the "interest" of some parents.

Based on my interviews with the nine teachers, the first year was very stressful for all the teams because of the nature of the students, student problems, and the intensity of the three-member teams working together to design a program "on the run". At the end of the first year, however, all three teams believed they had been successful with students and had received positive feedback from parents concerning the extra contact with them, as well as the extra attention the students had received. Although some students were referred to the alternative high school, principals and teachers both believed that more students were retained and were more successful than in previous years. The downside of the first year was the loss of two team members. At North H.S. one member decided near the end of the year to leave the pilot program; his hope and goals for interdisciplinary teaching had not been realized and he said this lack of progress was causing him personal stress. The team leader from another group left her respective team in August for a position in central administration.

The second year for all three teams was also a successful venture from their point of view. Better students with fewer personal problems and a year of previous experience boosted teachers' morale. By mid-year, however, all three teams questioned whether the program would continue if money became a big issue. All

members had known that project funding for the nine teachers was for a two year period, but they also expected that their success with students would ensure their survival beyond the initial funding. They realized that the District and State were under budget constraints, but they also believed, along with some District administrators, that if this program worked, funding would be found. They were wrong. Without being consulted, team members were informed the program would continue only through their own efforts and without any funding from within the District or from outside sources. What they were not totally aware of, although at least one teacher suspected, was how this decision came about. Behind-the-scenes discussions and politics were taking place between and among district administrators. It was at this point that the influence of one person became important.

THE PRINCIPAL--THEN AND NOW

As a teacher in the district during the late '60s, Dr. Brown was noted for being a creative and liberal social studies teacher as well as a somewhat controversial educator to many parents. In his early years of teaching Dr. Brown said that he had been encouraged to be creative and innovative. He left the traditional setting in the early '70s to develop one of the first alternative high schools for at-risk students within the state. For the next seven years he continued his schooling and moved up the administrative ranks. By 1980 he had completed his Doctorate in Administration and had moved from lead teacher to principal of the alternative program. In 1981 he was chosen to be the principal of North High. A highly regarded high school in the District, North serves a widely diverse socio-economic clientele and is the District's most racially integrated (ten percent of the students are

African American) school. Dr. Brown said of the school: "I think this was seen as a school that needed change, that was a little sleepy. It wasn't achieving it's potential. And I don't think it is there yet." Dr. Brown felt he had been brought to North High School to essentially "awaken a high school" and help return it to the glory of previous decades, both academically and athletically.

While lead teacher and principal of the alternative high school, Dr. Brown was well known for always overspending his budget--teachers' and students' needs always came first within the educational setting. But as the '80s progressed, money became a larger and larger issue in education generally and in the District. He realized, because of dwindling resources, that he would need to be more accountable for money spent. Within two years of moving to North High School he stated a need for "accountability" and his decisions became based on measurable outcomes for the school programs. He developed a data driven model for North High School which seemed to him to meet the requirements of accountability and measurable outcomes. Dr. Brown believed this would indicate to everyone the "best bang for the buck" because measurable outcomes would be indicative of their successes at his high school. Elements of the Effective Schools movement were visible in his approach, and he annually participated in Regional conferences about Effective Schools.

Even though Dr. Brown told me that "accountability" issues drive his work, he is still noted for over-spending his budget each year. According to one North H.S. teacher, "I think that Dr. Brown operates a lot on, 'If what you're asking for is reasonable' then he's in agreement, he'll find a way." Dr. Brown corraborated this when he said: "I believe in innovation and have never said 'No' to teachers who

want to try something as long as the money is available or that it doesn't cost any more than what they are doing." Or, as one teacher candidly admitted and Dr. Brown quite frankly stated, "until a parent complains."

Dr. Brown is very sincere about the school and what he is trying to do. Data is a way for him to show accountability, particularly now that money is more scarce than in the 1960s. Conversations with Dr. Brown are punctuated with the variety of statistics that represent the school's and students' achievements. For example, in one interview he said:

> I think I have a better answer of outcomes based at the senior high level. We do this pretty extensive databook every year and...keep track of basically program completers and performance levels and test scores. I think that's the way to measure growth in a high school level. Outcomes based tests are okay, can be valid and useful in comparing progress from year to year. But I think in terms of truly saying, "Are we getting better or are we getting worse at this school?" we need to come up with some criteria like that....Our school improvement plan has become, in recent years, very specific, very quantitative....My goals for the school are results oriented, not process oriented.

Dr. Brown believes these indicators support his contention that North High School is becoming an increasingly effective school. This contention is not shared or supported by some of his own faculty and other District administrators, as three quotes illustrate:

> We're very data driven. We were talking before about evaluation of the program, that we don't have a data driven evaluation of this program, even at the end of the year. And that's never bothered me a whole lot because I tend to look at it affectively probably rather than statistics driven. But I would say that's what we're becoming more and more, a data driven school. The information that we're given now as a staff is a lot of statistics. Dr. Brown keeps a lot of information about the translation to numbers and percentages kinds of things. And I think that the Effective Schools Conference that they've been to for about the past five years really led them in that direction....We seem to have a school that's unwilling to take a look at what we're really about rather than what the image is; we concentrate on the awards, we concentrate on the high test Scores, we concentrate on where our kids go to school as the indicators of fine education. (North TEAM member)

> We're basically a school that is designed for college-bound kids when there's so many of 'em don't....We don't even have like a basic applied consumer math course here any more. Kids have to take algebra classes. There's this idea that all kids should take algebra. This comes back to this deal, even if you give 'em 4 trimesters to do what normally kids do in 3, it's still doesn't make it any better. It's just not for them....I think that's a good P.R. thing; I think they have to publish reports about these are the courses we have, this is the amount of kids that stay in our courses and so on. That's why we have a lot of AP classes, too. I think it's a lot of public relations. I'm offering an AP class. Those parents will squawk about it, but the other end, if you don't offer a class, who's gonna say anything? We as teachers have to do that. (North TEAM member)

> Dr. Brown believes that he really doesn't need to change North, that everything is fine over there. I can talk with Bill or Anne (assistant principals) and they can say that it has been a hell of a week with fights and such and Dr. Brown will say the week has been one of the better ones. Dr. Brown is very good at P.R. and creating an illusion at North that everything is just fine. Perhaps he really believes it since he continually says it. (High School Principal in District)

As much as some members of his own staff questioned the use of data as a means of P.R., others within the staff accepted and were influenced by such information. This became visible in two ways. First, as the Superintendent stated, "The department chairs are really driven by data where they reflect the leadership of the school that espouses the need for competition and results....The staff there is buying into this and this is the strongest faculty not understanding the need for various changes!" At North, department chairs said that Dr. Brown is the senior administrator in the District and they believe he "runs" what is going on in the District. At the same time the department chairs also reflected the importance of data for determining decisions at North and questioned the results of such a program as the TEAM if there were no quantifiable results.

The second illustration of staff acceptance of data driven assessment was the development of programs which increased certain statistics, i.e., students enrolled in algebra, geometry and Spanish.

> The Spanish department would like to start a Spanish course that would teach two years of Spanish in three years. Almost every kid or 82% of our freshmen start out in a foreign language. They like to provide a way, they don't want to water down the curriculum, they just want to provide some kids more time....We have developed a very innovative program, freshmen either take fast track algebra program or regular algebra or Algebra Prep. The kids in Algebra Prep, when they finish that, we put them into a four term Algebra I program. We have an elastic that we call Math Lab I which is the third of the four terms. So they're ready for geometry instead of beginning of their junior year, second term their junior year, and we have a four term geometry program....It's really an outcomes based, mastery learning process. You're seeing kids learn the same stuff but it takes them a little bit longer. (Dr. Brown)

Such innovations and requests by his own staff reflect another aspect of Dr. Brown's philosophy. Dr. Brown's "data driven" process has taken the school and the staff in directions that would not have been anticipated by any of them. In order to continue to improve these numbers, the "staff" innovations have students progressing at a slower pace, taking four terms to conclude a three term process. These numbers continue to grow and continue to be reported to staff and constituency as favorable results. The staff is developing similar courses for Spanish. Both approaches support the following philosophy by Dr. Brown.

> My philosophy on this school is not in concert with the national trend that vigorously opposes all leveling and tracking. I do not accept that point of view. We try very hard not to track kids. Most of our high profile programs are open access. There's no prerequisite for AP English--sign up, be a senior, that's the only prerequisite. But we'd like to provide a variety of options, the kid who's highly motivated has options and the kid who has low motivation does, too. So we're trying to erase various levels of achievement and performance around here. (Dr. Brown)

Dr. Brown believes this philosophy will provide the "major direction for this school--equity and equality--those are the two general goal areas."

During my final interview with Dr. Brown, he readily discussed those parents who most often contact him. "The parents who make most contact are the PTA people, booster groups--which there are many--the African-American parents,

which also has a parent group, and some of the special ed parents." He admitted it tends to be the better educated people who are involved and who contact him because they are "the parents who have the time to be involved in the school" such as serving on the PTA and volunteering to assist with various activities at North High. And within the same context, Dr. Brown continued on to say that "they are the ones who have the greatest influence on how I run this school."

As indicated by Dr. Brown, it is the better educated and more affluent who have the free time to be involved with the school; they are the parents who meet with him and contact him about their concerns. These are the people who he "listens to" throughout the year. This has also been obvious to his own staff, some of the team members in all three high schools and others not involved with the innovation, who commented on it during interviews.

In an interview with me, Dr. Brown described the team innovation:

> I'm not disinterested in the TEAM but this is so process oriented, so wishy washy in terms of outcomes that it just isn't exactly constant with my particular line of thinking at this time but it's not antithetical to it in anyway. No opposition to it, it's just...so that, that...(pause)

This view of the TEAM was public and did not go unnoticed by his fellow principals, central administrators and building teachers. All made comments throughout the research period concerning his lack of interest at meetings or lack of verbal/visible support at North High and within the District.

END OF PROGRAM

In March and April of the second year, the teams were slowly informed that the funding had been terminated and the teams could continue to exist but without the extra planning time to work as a team or other resources. This did not come as a

surprise to most of the TEAM members; similar potential scenarios had been mentioned by several TEAM teachers in interviews during the previous spring. When asked about the future of the program in late winter, several had already been anticipating its demise since they had not heard anything yet about funding and planning for the potential third year. This to them was a strong clue that the end was near. In spite of these negative indications, they continued to hope the program might be saved in part because they had strong support from two principals, the Superintendent and the Director of High Schools; in part because any visits from school board members as well as a presentation about the TEAMs to them had been met with very strong support.

When the TEAM members questioned why the program was to end, the responses varied. However, the most frequent response was the problem of funding. The District budget was tight and would not be able to support this experimental program. The second response was that the Program was an innovation and, as such, could only receive its current funding for two years. Apparently, the original source had been for the first two years of the pilot only and now, as several teachers related to me, "We have been told the money from the outside source was incentive for innovation and that after two years this is no longer a novel idea; therefore, the money will be used elsewhere." In spite of their discussions with their respective building principals, their perceived successes with students, and their support reported from surveys and discussions with parents, the teams were disbanded in two of the three high schools. One team elected to continue when their building principal promised to provide them substitute teachers for one-half day, once-a-month, so they could spend time discussing their

commonly shared students and work on some common lessons among their courses.

The TEAM at North completely disbanded and the program there ended. As the teachers related, they sensed there was no support for the program from Dr. Brown. By this time (as alluded to earlier) Dr. Brown also wanted to expand the Spanish with a program model comparable to the math program. This meant one of the TEAM members would be needed elsewhere. Dr. Brown had also hoped to use the funds, if possible, to expand AP classes or develop another new program. He had already discussed these options with other district administrators.

REACTIONS

By the end of the second year of my research interviews and on into the following summer, teachers and administrators spoke candidly about the TEAM innovation, the loss of funding and the lack of support from one influential principal in regard to the funding. It was at this time that I became more aware of the internal micropolitics of this innovation and the lack of knowledge the teachers had of the inner workings of the District. Different levels of reactions occurred in relation to the loss. I will relate these from the various levels of involvement and power within the system.

Parents

TEAM members at North believed that the Program was very low on Mr. Brown's priority list since he seldom visited them or discussed the program with them. His own comments are insightful: "The program is pretty much invisible around here which is probably good. I mean I don't view it as a negative, it's pretty much invisible." The reactions from some parents did not reflect this

perspective by Dr. Brown.

> About a half dozen parents contacted me when they heard that the Program was to end and wondered what they could do. I told them who they needed to contact--Dr. Brown and Central Administrators--and how they needed to express their concerns to them. One parent even said: "I don't know if Matt would have made it without this program!" (North TEAM member)

During the research time and after the loss of the TEAM Program, I had asked Dr. Brown about his feedback from parents. Again, his comments are insightful.

> All the positives I guess have come from the teachers themselves....The other thing is they deal pretty much with the bottom 50%, the less vocal parents to begin with. It's the so called "middle level." But since everybody wants to teach top level we just create lots of top level sections and anybody who's in the advanced algebra program or the science waiver program or top level language arts can't be in [the TEAM] Program because it can't be scheduled. I mean, it can't be easily scheduled. And so the parents who talk to me about their concerns, their kids aren't in the program....These kids are all in the three bottom quartiles, that's for sure and most them in the bottom two quartiles, there might be a few above the mid-point. (Dr. Brown)

During the final interview, after the TEAM Program funding had been terminated, Dr. Brown related that he had not received any comments from the TEAM members, from parents, and from other staff--"I haven't had one phone call, haven't had one letter."--just as it had been throughout the two years of piloting. When I mentioned about the TEAM hearing from parents and asked about the potential of parents making any requests, he matter-of-factly said that "it would be inconsequential because their kids would move on and they would no longer be at the ninth level." He went on to mention that these parents could have students coming up but he really did not have much to say other than he has not heard from these parents all year and these are the parents that usually don't say much.

Teachers

Participating teachers at North realized they had not had much support from the

building administration throughout the two years of the pilot. As much as they had shared their positive comments from parents with Dr. Brown and attempted different approaches with students to help make them successful, they were not able to get his attention. Even when parents were aware of the end of the TEAM Program and participating teachers instructed the parents on what to do, there was no impact on the administration. As the program ended, the participating and nonparticipating teachers also realized that the clientele the TEAM had as students were not those who had any influence on the programs at North High.

> The thing that we run into here, that we ran into last year and that we've run into on a much more limited basis this year, is that it becomes a social issue. The boy that we have this year that questioned it [the TEAM Program]...not the boy but the parents...is in a social group that's different than most of these kids, and so most of his friends are in top level class, so they're not in his classes. They may not have been in any of the same classes anyway, but they aren't. He's in an average class. They're probably in a top level class, so it becomes a social issue. And that came up more than once last year. (North TEAM Member)

> There are people in our building that spend a great deal of time on public relations. And perhaps with the clientele that we have, that's important. I don't personally share that belief but there are people apparently who think that's important....Kids speech is all geared to achievement--what the number of kids in National Honor Society, the number of kids that get academic awards, that kind of P.R. thing. There's a great deal of energy spent at keeping certain groups of people happy in our building. I don't mean teachers, I mean parents happy. (North TEAM Member)

In the final say, even with parents being supportive, the teachers strongly believing that the TEAM concept was having an impact on the needs of the "average" student, and an advisory committee to the School Board making a report recommending integration of key skills as demonstrated in "the TEAM Program at the 9th grade level," the program ended. As one TEAM member related, "We just didn't have any advocates here!" Advocates existed but they were not vocal.

Principals in District High Schools

Three key points came out in discussions with the principals near the end of the pilot years and after the pilot program had officially been ended. Those points concerned funding of the program, reaction to funding such a program by redirecting some of the funding for AP courses, and how high SES clientele might be influencing the direction of decisions within the District.

When I asked about funding, the responses were varied--sometimes similar to the teachers and, other times, different. The principals believed that the money source had ended, could no longer be used for innovation, or would now have to be used for other issues within a budget-strapped district. One principal, in a quiet and candid discussion, mentioned that Dr. Brown had never been supportive of the TEAM concept nor supportive of the money being spent in this fashion. In his own way, apparently Dr. Brown had been pushing until the end of the funding time for the dollars to be used as he desired within his building. This leader added:

> He is very strong in this district and is very political in his dealings. He wants the innovations to come from himself rather than others....I have been complimented by central administrators on something we are doing well and Dr. Brown has come back and said that he would not use that at North. He may eventually but he will not acknowledge where he got the idea. (District Principal)

Because the current funding source was no longer available and many teachers mentioned their concerns about the expanding number of AP classes in the district, I asked about this as a possible source of funding. Dr. Brown replied that AP classes are open to all students, all they have to do is enroll in them. Another principal in a different building was more matter-of-fact: "If I cut AP like the teachers and I would like to, the parents would have me out of here in no time at

all!" In one building, the high school known as the "blue collar" school, AP classes were only now being developed.

Finally, with Dr. Brown's pushing, the three principals and the Director of the high schools agreed to the non-funding of the teams, against the desires of the two other principals. Several related the decision to the influence that Dr. Brown seems to have within the upper echelon of administrators: "Dr. Brown is very influential in the way things occur in this district" (District Principal). This same principal then talked further about the influence he believes Dr. Brown exerts on the Director of High Schools with the Director often supporting Dr. Brown while the other two principals may have contrary opinions.

In the end, without any prodding, this principal stated that Dr. Brown has a strong and elite group of parents who he believes very much influences the direction Dr. Brown takes his school. These comments mirrored closely the comments Dr. Brown had made to me during our last interview and mirrored comments made to me by the Superintendent during our last interview, as well.

Central Administrators

The same three key points were made by central administrators at the end of the program. When asked about AP as a possible source of redirected funds, the Superintendent replied as he believed the principals would answer: "They would receive a lot of pressure from the influential elite and would lose their positions if they were to drop AP for something else." Another central administrator talked more about the equity of staffing at each of the high schools and that the principals decide how to use their staff allocation. He went on to say that "parents really don't say much about classes in the schools. They support what is going on and realize

we have very good schools. Could the problems with parents articulated by the principals be a perception rather than a reality?"

The question of funding brought different answers from central administrators. The Superintendent, because of his philosophy of shared decision making and empowerment of others, claimed to be the last to know about the loss of funding.[1] The Superintendent said the decision had been made jointly by the principals and the Director of High Schools for the funding to be used elsewhere. He had been upset and had told the administrators so in very direct terms; but he remarked that he also had to accept the decision or go against his own philosophy.

The administrator who had developed the pilot program idea and had secured the funding agreed with the opinions expressed by the Superintendent. The funding could have been available but the Director and principals had decided the funding would have to be for all schools or none. As was related to me by one principal, two of the three principals pushed for the continued funding with the Director siding with Dr. Brown. Ultimately, the four reached consensus for no funding and to use the money elsewhere in the District.

The Director of High Schools saw the funding issue as a District finance problem. Another problem, he felt, was lack of attention to funding beyond "pilot status" from the outset: They should have considered much earlier where this funding would come from once the pilot years ended. This had been overlooked and in his words, this tends to be a problem with many pilot programs.[2]

---

1 The Superintendent resigned from the District during the summer, after the TEAM funding situation had come to his attention in late May.

2 Earlier in the research, his comments indicated support for the TEAM Program as a means to encourage change within the high schools.

The Superintendent too acknowledged Dr. Brown's power within the District:

> Dr. Brown has trained the high SES that they want high success through the use of data. Unfortunately, this needs to be turned around with Dr. Brown determining what needs to be the driving force. As it is now, however, Dr. Brown is not only the "most politically astute" principal in the District but also has the greatest influence.

Other administrators described Dr. Brown as "a guru in the pecking order" and as the "grandfather" of the principals. These comments indicated perceptions of his influence on the District. Additional comments from District administrators also reflected their beliefs regarding the possible influence of the high SES upon Dr. Brown. One such comment:

> My name still may be held in vain in a lot of households in the North [side] in terms of the position I took and the victory I won with things like foreign languages in middle school. I had three or four doctor's wives and high falutin' wealthy people wanting my head. And so I know what Dr. Brown feels and they're with him now. And you know it's just a classic case of affluence and "By god you're going to respond to my needs or I'm going to make life just miserable for you." (Central Administrator)

In a later interview, this same administrator said: "Dr. Brown often gets what is desired at North--'the squeaky wheels'--and the same holds true of the parents there since they are the ones who make the most noise."

CONCLUSION/SUMMARY

In the end, Dr. Brown passed off the failure of the TEAM innovation as "another example of what happens when an innovation comes from downtown or from the top down. This would be a good case study of the failure of innovation." My final analysis does demonstrate that many problems existed between and within levels of the District. These problems should not be viewed as sufficiently serious to alone have ended the program. Dr. Brown lobbied to use the money supporting this effort for other interests, he expressed and demonstrated no real interest in the

innovation during its brief lifespan, and he participated in making the decisions that effectively ended it. Dr. Brown's reasons for his actions may be many but two that he articulated appeared to be of great importance: an affluent constituency which was vocal was not affected, and the innovation did not "fit" into the data-driven approach to change that he favored.

Some readers may suggest that many of the above comments result from jealousy or envy. These could be arguable; however, the same comments of influence are made by teachers within North H.S. as well as Dr. Brown himself. Additionally, while the power Dr. Brown wields may be perceived as a strength, his obligation to the vocal and involved constituency most often was perceived as a mixed blessing, at best.

As the Superintendent stated, "perception IS reality" with Dr. Brown, and Dr. Brown seems to have turned his perceptions of the needs and desires of the high SES clientele and his current philosophy of school change into the reality of North High School. Dr. Brown himself summed up part of his philosophy during one of our interviews: "Our philosophy: We don't fight with parents if they want something for their child. That sets up winners and losers and we don't want that." But since only the powerful, mostly high SES, people contact him and influence him, who really become the winners and the losers? And how much is this program's demise the result of this philosophy/policy with all of its attendant consequences?

References

Blase, J. J. (1991). The politics of life in schools: Power, conflict, and cooperation. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Bogdan, C. B. & Biklen, S. K. (1982). Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.

Common, D. L. (1983). Power: The missing concept in the dominant model of school change. Theory Into Practice, 22(3), 203-210.

Corwin, R. G. (1983). The entrepreneurial bureaucracy: Biographies of two federal programs in education. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press

Cuban, L. (1988). A fundamental puzzle of school reform. Phi Delta Kappan, 69(5), 340-344.

Goetz, J. P. & LeCompte, M. D. (1984). Ethnography and qualitative design in educational research. Orlando, FL: Academic Press, Inc.

Mangham, I. (1979). The politics of organizational change. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). Qualitative evaluation and research methods. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Skrtic, T. M. (1985). Doing naturalistic research into educational organizations. In Y. S. Lincoln (Ed.), Organizational theory and inquiry: The paradigm revolution (pp. 185-220). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Yin, R. K. (1989). Case study research: Design and methods (rev. ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.